

25 NOV 1996

APEC LEADERS DON BARONG FOR SUMMIT

SUBIC BAY, Nov 25 (Bernama) -- Just like the other 17 Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) leaders, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad looked dashing in his "barong tagalog" as he arrived at the Leaders' Hall for the Apec summit here today.

This is the second time the leaders are wearing the formal men's wear of the host country when attending an Apec summit. They wore "batik" when they convened in Indonesia for the 1994 Apec meeting at Bogor.

The barongs worn by the leaders today are a gift from Philippines President Fidel Ramos.

They are made from an original hand-woven blend of 50 per cent Philippine silk and 50 per cent pina fibre and were designed by Filipino fashion designer Jeanne Margaret Goulbourn.

She had the special embroidery on the barongs hand-made by Filipino artisans in the province of Laguna.

The barong tagalog for the Apec leaders is the result of a partnership between Goulbourn and a South Korean businessman, Eun Il Lee.

While each leader's barong has its own original design, they have a common denominator which is the design inspired by the intricate window patterns of the ancestral homes in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, which is a northern province of the Philippines, and ricefields ready for harvest. -- BERNAMA

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